**Rural telephony obligations**

1718. SHRI RUMANDLA RAAMACHANDRAYYA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government proposed to make it mandatory for basic telecom service operators to roll out their rural telephony obligations;

(b) if so, the response of the operators for ensuring their rural obligations; and

(c) the stringent penalty proposed for those violating the rural obligation targets?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) to (c) As per New Telecom Policy, 1999, rural telephony is mandatory for Basic Telephone Service Operators. Provision of a fixed number of Village Public Telephones were stipulated as a part of the roll out obligation for the private Basic Service Operators who were granted licences in 1997-98. These operators could not fulfill the roll out obligations for providing village Public Telephones (VPTs). The Liquidated Damages of Rs. 53.75 crores were recovered from these Private Service Operators for not fulfilling the roll out obligations and for not commissioning the service in time. The Basic Service Operators who were granted licences in 2001-02 were to set up Points of Presence in Urban, Semi-urban and Rural Short Distance Charging Areas (SDCA) in equal proportion in each of the four phases. Encashment of performance Bank Gurantee was stipulated for non-fulfillment of roll out obligations at the end of 2d, 3rd and 4th phase after three, five and seven years of signing of the licence agreement. The period for the same is not over. Further these Private Basic Service Operators have now migrated to unified Access Service License Regime except in four service areas wherein roll out obligations are stipulated in terms of District Headquarter and the coverage of 50% of District Headquarter in three years or any town in lie thereof.

**Dependency of Indian IT companies on USA**

†1719. SHRIMATI KUM KUM RAI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that Indian IT companies are dependent on USA for business;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.